

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 PC-04 OMB-01 CIEP-03 TRSE-00 EB-11

DRC-01 /136 W

----- 014910

R 031800Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2331

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5818

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EC

SUBJECT: "CALUMNY" WILL GET YOU NOWHERE--EXCEPT IN JAIL

1. ANOTHER CAUSATIVE FACTOR SURROUNDING THE ARREST OF VELASQUISTA LEADER ARROYO (QUITO 5769) IS THE ACCUSATION HE IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE AUTHORED TO THE EFFECT THAT PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ HAS ABUSED HIS OFFICE TO ACQUIRE A FARM IN THE SANTO DOMINGO DE LOS COLORADOS AREA FROM THE AGRARIAN REFORM INSTITUTE (IERAC), AND THEN HELPED HIMSELF TO QUESTIONABLE LOANS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT BANK TO OPERATE THE PROPERTY.

2. THE ORIGINAL ACCOUNTS OF ARROYO'S DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST THE GOE (QUITO 4599) OMITTED ANY REFERENCE TO SUCH CHARGES, BUT THIS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN AN EXERCISE OF JOURNALISTIC DISCRETION WHICH ECUADOR'S PRESS HAS SHOWN EVER SINCE THE ADVENT OF THE PRESENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT. IN ANY CASE, QUESTIONS WERE APPARENTLY PUT TO COL. AGUIRRE WHO, AS SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ADMINISTRATION, USUALLY ACTS AS THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS SPOKESMAN, AGUIRRE, PRESUMABLY WITH PRESIDENTIAL CONCURRENCE, RAISED THE ISSUE PUBLICLY ON AUGUST 26. HE DENIED ANY WRONGDOING, ACCUSED ARROYO

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OF "CALUMNY", AND INDICATED HE WOULD BE PROSECUTED. THE

SPECIFICS OF RODRIGUEZ' SMALL LAND HOLDING WERE SUBSEQUENTLY PUBLISHED AS WELL AS DETAILS OF THE LOANS.

3. COMMENT: THE INCIDENT HAS OBVIOUSLY HIT ON A SENSITIVE NERVE IN THE GOE. RODRIGUEZ DEVOTED SEVERAL MINUTES OF HIS AUGUST 29 PRESS CONFERENCE (QUITO 5812) TO INSISTING ON THE LEGITIMACY OF HIS DEALINGS WITH THE TWO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ("JUST LIKE ANY OTHER CITIZEN"). FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT WE CAN HARDLY COMMENT ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUE. HOWEVER, UNEMPLOYED EX-POLITICIANS ARE UNANIMOUS IN IDENTIFYING CORRUPTION (OR THE APPEARANCE OF SAME) AS THE PRESENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S POTENTIAL ACHILLES' HEEL, AND OF GREATER POTENTIAL DANGER THAN THE ISSUE OF INFLATION. AS FOR THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF, IT HAS BEEN CLEARLY UPSET AND IRRITATED BY WHAT IT VIEWS AS THE FIRST SERIOUS AD HOMINEM ATTACK ON RODRIGUEZ. IN DISCUSSING THIS CASE WITH THE AMBASSADOR THE NIGHT ARROYO'S ARREST WAS ANNOUNCED, MINGOV POVEDA, MINFIN MONCAYO, AND AGUIRRE CONCENTRATED THEIR INDIGNATION ON THIS ASPECT EXCLUSIVELY. PRESUMABLY FOR THIS REASON AND NOT JUST BECAUSE OF HIS VELASQUISTA DECLARATION, THE ARMY JOINED THE POLICE IN "SEARCHING" FOR ARROYO AND WERE SUDDENLY ABLE TO FIND AND ARREST HIM.

BREWSTER

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